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Reserve

A BEETS

Container: Use R-enamel cans.

Quality of product: Use young tender beets for canning. Beets should be canned soon after harvesting since storage for any length of time may result in a bitter flavor. Beets that are of a uniform dark red color are more desirable for canning than those of lighter color. Beets that have been slowed in development by dry weather should not be canned since they will be fibrous and woody.

Preparation: Leave the root and 1 inch of the leaf stalks on the beets to prevent the bleeding of red color during steaming. Wash the beets thoroughly. It may be desirable to soak beets to loosen dirt before washing. Use a vegetable brush in washing but take care not to break the skin or root. The last washing should show no evidence of dirt.

Beets are graded for size during washing to give uniformity when they are steamed for peeling. They are sorted usually into three sizes as follows:

- Small - less than 1 inch in diameter
- Medium - 1 to 1½ inches in diameter
- Large - more than 1½ inches in diameter

Beets larger than 2 inches in diameter are cut before canning. Those smaller than 2 inches in diameter are usually canned whole.

To facilitate peeling, steam beets at about 230° F. (6 pounds pressure) for 10 to 15 minutes, according to the size. Wire-lined retort crates or blanching baskets may be used for placing beets in the retort.

Cool beets in cold water immediately on removal from the retort. Do not cool more than is necessary for handling beets in peeling. Complete cooling or delay in peeling will make the peel more difficult to remove. Slip peel off beets by hand. Trim off any blemishes or woody portions. If the whole beet is fibrous it should be discarded, since heat penetration will be retarded and spoilage may result.

Large beets may be quartered or sliced before filling into cans. Slices are usually 3/8-inch thick.

Filling: Cans should be filled as soon as beets are peeled. There should be no delay in filling since beets darken rapidly after peeling or slicing. Pack close in cans leaving 1/4-inch head space. Fill can completely with boiling hot water or brine.

Exhausting: Exhaust beets to a center can temperature of 180° F.

Sealing: Seal cans immediately after removing from exhaust box and place at once in retort. Do not permit cans to cool before sealing and processing.

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Processing: Process beets as follows:

No. 2 cans	-	30 minutes	at	240° F.	(10 pounds pressure)
No. 2½ cans	-	30	"	"	"
No. 3 cans	-	30	"	"	"
No. 10 cans	-	40	"	"	"

Cooling: Immediately after processing is completed, cool the cans as rapidly as possible to 100° F. This leaves enough heat in the cans to dry them and prevent rusting. When the cans are removed from the cooling water they should be tilted to drain off excess water, and then should be stacked in a well-ventilated place until cold. Do not put cans in cartons until they are cold and dry.